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Palestine in Transition from War to Peace

BY

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PALESTINE IN TRANSITION FROM WAR TO PEACE.

THE process of beating swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks is one of fascinating interest and import in the evolution of the various countries of the globe participating in the Great War; and not least in that of Palestine. For apart from the imaginative appeal of the history of a land rich in such historic and religious traditions, Palestine has now become of vital significance in the political and economic Near East problem. Upon its peace and prosperity, the stability and well being of the Near Eastern lands largely depend; and with the future of those lands are involved the interests of Europe and the Orient, and indeed the whole world. The British Army found Palestine lying paralysed by the Turkish governmental régime and the Allied blockades. What efforts were made by the administrators (following in the wake of the soldiers) to set the wheels of the State in motion again after the stoppage of war? What were the chief difficulties of the task with which they were confronted? These are questions to be discussed in this brief study of recent British administration.

In these impressions of Palestine in transition from war to peace, the period covered is that of the first year after Allenby's tide of victory had irresistibly flowed north, i.e., from September, 1918, to September, 1919. It is proposed first to treat of certain aspects of the policy of reconstruction adopted by the British authorities, e.g., measures for the relief of a starving population, for the resuscitation of trade and commerce, for the restarting and driving of the machinery of government. In the second part of the study some of the main racial, religious and national problems of these regions will be referred to, e.g., the Jewish (Zionist) Question, the feuds of Christian and Moslem, of Latin Catholics and Greek Orthodox adherents, the national rivalries of Britain, France, Italy, America, Germany, and Turkey, the influence of Arab nationalism, the clash of interests between townsmen and farmers and nomadic Bedouins.

A word as to the organization of the Military Administration which controlled Palestine during this period. Occupied

enemy territory in the Levant was divided first into three and then later into four sectors, viz., North, South, East, and West. The West sector (Syria proper with centre at Beyrout) was under French control from the very outset; and the French replaced the British in the North sector in the summer of 1919. Occupied enemy territory East (the lands east of the Jordan with centre at Damascus) was in 1918-19 subject to the Arab King of the Hedjaz, and his enlightened son Emir Feisal. Occupied enemy territory West was administered by the British from headquarters at Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives. Major-General Sir Arthur Money was the first Chief Administrator, being afterwards succeeded by Major-General Sir A. Watson. The old Turkish governmental districts were utilized, British Military Governors being placed in charge. Thus the brilliant Brigadier-General R. Storrs was appointed at Jerusalem. The Turkish "Sanyak of Acre" however saw its seat of administration moved from Acre to Haifa.

At the time of the British occupation in September, 1918, Palestine north of Jerusalem was a land of pitiable starvation, of adult emaciation and grave infant mortality. Agriculture had been sadly neglected, because the male cultivators had been torn from their homes to become conscripts in the Turkish army. Whatever agricultural produce came to hand was appropriated for the needs of the army; the civilians fed merely upon the crumbs that fell from the military food-purveyor's table. The timber supply of the country, moreover, was being rapidly depleted. To illustrate: the "excellency of Carmel" (as Isaiah had described it) had formerly consisted for the most part in her wealth of foliage, wood and forest. But great masses of Mount Carmel's superb oaks and pines and carobs and olive-trees were ruthlessly cut down by the Turkish authorities to provide wood for trench dug-outs and shell-proof shelters.

As command of the sea belonged to the Allies, the starving population of Asia Minor could obtain no supplies by water. Only those who visited an enemy country soon after the conclusion of hostilities can adequately realize the general importance of sea power in history, and in particular the effectiveness, the terrible effectiveness, of the Allied blockade. Com-

mand of the sea meant command of food in those parts; maritime control spelt control of raiment too. For indeed the inhabitants were half-naked by the autumn of 1918. As their loose flowing robes wore out in the course of the war-years, they could not obtain the Lancashire cotton fabrics and manufactured goods to replace them. Palestine moreover had been cursed during the war by a terrible visitation of Nature in the shape of a destroying plague of locusts, which in clouds blackening the sky had descended and had eaten up "all the green things upon the earth."

To fight the famine and destitution of the peoples of Asia Minor, measures of relief were promptly taken by the British authorities. Ships down in Egypt were loaded up with corn, flour, sugar, and other foodstuffs, and despatched to the Palestinian and Syrian ports of Jaffa, Haifa, Beyrout, etc.; here they were discharged and distributed freely amongst the starving populace.

The strategic railway built under Murray and Allenby was of the greatest service in this relief work. Running up from Egypt across the Sinai Desert into Palestine, the track had been completed as far as the British battle-front covering Southern Palestine, the "jumping off" line for Allenby's last and finest campaign of September, 1918. After the Armistice, the railway was prolonged to Haifa, where it joined the Hedjaz (Mecca pilgrim) railway. A great Levant railway artery thus came into being, the Cairo-Haifa-Damascus-Constantinople route, if one break in the line be excepted. From this railway artery there circulated the life-giving food and clothing amongst the surrounding districts. In this connexion tribute must be paid to the members of the American Relief Commissions, who greatly assisted in this task of distribution.

Free doles of foodstuffs could not be maintained indefinitely by the British. For several months, however, the Administration from time to time distributed supplies of Australian flour, Indian rice, Egyptian sugar at exceedingly low prices to the people; they were enabled to do this as middlemen's profits were eliminated and freight and transport charges were small, owing to the employment of soldier-labour.

From January, 1919, when the Haifa section of the "Palestine Military Railway" was completed, private commercial enterprise between Palestine and Egypt was authorized. As however most of the military supplies for the numerous British, French and Hedjaz detachments scattered throughout Asia Minor had to be transported by this railway and its connexions, private trade was possible at first only on a small scale. Only one or two ten-ton trucks of merchandise could be allowed per day. But lucky the trader who received permission to send a wagon of sugar or rice or Manchester goods to Haifa or Jerusalem or Damascus at this period. Great was his financial reward! Conscious of this fact, nearly every merchant throughout the length and breadth of the Levant thrust up his hands in appeal for the coveted license of export from Egypt.

The principle of allocation of these valuable commercial privileges was that of preference to friends of the Allies and exclusion of enemy traders. A "Black List" was prepared of those merchants who were known by the Army Intelligence Files to have worked during the war in the interests of the Turks or Germans; applications from prominent business men of Haifa and Nablous who had been associated with the Young Turk "Committee of Union and Progress" were tossed into the waste paper basket. On the other hand those who had laboured and suffered for the Allied cause were now recompensed in part by the grant of these commercial facilities. A Maltese long domiciled in Palestine at Haifa received such privileges for invaluable services rendered to the British military authorities. This Maltese had always manifested Anglophile sentiments, and one of his sons, a fine, frank, intelligent youth, graduated at the American Syrian Protestant College at Beyrout, and afterwards in Egypt under British auspices. On the advance of the British from Egypt into Palestine, the two voluntarily engaged in our Intelligence Service. The father from Haifa behind the Turkish line would glean all the knowledge he could as to the dispositions and movements of the Turkish army. A torpedo-boat destroyer or a submarine would then convey his son from Egypt and land him on the deserted coast between Acre and Tyre; usually a boat was lowered to take

him to shore, but once or twice resort had to be made to swimming through troubled waters. The father on the appointed day would leave his wife and family, steal out under cover of darkness from the town of Haifa, and making a detour to avoid Acre would traverse the hills and reach the shore-rendezvous after a journey of over 12 miles. Here he would communicate his information to his son, who brought it back post-haste to the Intelligence Staff at Cairo, thence to be transmitted straightaway to Army Headquarters "up the line." The work can be characterized by the ugly sinister name of espionage, but these Maltese were indubitably brave men. The father was twice imprisoned by the Turks on suspicion of treasonable intrigue; punishment of torture and death was suspended over him, but more fortunate than many others he was eventually released when actual proofs of his complicity failed to be found. In reward for their services Allenby issued a special order that they should receive every assistance in their commercial transactions.

All the world knows of Allenby's military genius; but his talents of administration have been somewhat hidden from the eyes of the general public. It is worthy of note that the finest generals in history have been almost invariably in the first rank not only of military but of civil administration; as Frederick the Great, Napoleon, Wellington—and Allenby is no exception. His powers of organization, his capacity of dealing with men and races and complex problems of government are remarkable. That he had a profound insight into psychology is attested by his relations with the troops under his command. He realized that soldiers like to see their generals sharing their life "in the field," and despise the action of his predecessor Murray in directing operations from a luxurious mansion in Cairo hundreds of miles away. He realized that war-worn troops who had marched every inch across the Sinai Desert and had met with two repulses before Gaza wanted a change of scene; his prescription of seven days leave in Egypt away from the battle-front was the best of all possible tonics. Every soldier under him learned unbounded confidence in his leadership. In his dealings with civilians, Allenby displayed the same grip on human nature as with soldiers. The present

writer will not soon forget the occasion when he met the assembled heads of the contending communities in Haifa (Jewish, Christian and Moslem), and combined a masterly firmness with a conciliatory manner that worked wonders in cooling heated feelings. In his treatment of the claims and pretensions of various sects and parties, when final appeal was made to him, Allenby manifested an unswerving impartiality. It could not be said of him that he was partisan of Jew or of Gentile.

If Allenby evinced a genuine appreciation of civil needs as distinct from military interests, the same could not be said for all the army men under him. A few of these "militarists," as they may truly be called, threw many obstacles in the path of commercial and economic revival. They retained war methods and continued war measures long after the "state of war" (except in a technical diplomatic sense) had passed away. Palestine was not a land of sullen hostility like Germany; it was a land of liberated peoples. A national revolt was undesired and impossible. Elaborate precautions and restrictions on liberty were therefore utterly unnecessary and acutely damaging to our prestige. Amongst these repressive measures were the censorship on posts and telegraphs and the restrictions on personal movement. For many months after the Armistice the application of a Palestinian to go down into Egypt had to pass through innumerable channels; endorsement had to be obtained from the local Intelligence Officer and the local Economic Section Officer, from the D.Q.M.G. of General Headquarters, from the Intelligence and Economic Section authorities in Egypt, from the Director General of Public Security and others. As a result some five or six weeks elapsed before permission was finally gained—by which time the reason for the journey had often disappeared. Letters moreover addressed to a village near by had to be sent to the Censorship Office some sixty miles away before being returned, entailing a loss of some days in the period between despatch and receipt. Censorship of telegrams was maintained for an unconscionable time. Certain of the Staff indeed revelled in this "red tape." They could not easily change their war outlook on life; they could not accustom themselves to a new orientation created by

peace. They still regarded all civilians as either knaves or fools and all traders as bloated profiteers.

On the whole the officials of the Palestine Military Railway—members of the Royal Engineers—performed an invaluable work in aiding the resuscitation of commerce by facilitating transport of merchandise. As time went on and civilian business was opened up, more and more labour on this score fell upon the railwaymen's shoulders—but their pay remained the same, that of their military rank. It says much for the public spirit of these sappers and signalmen and sergeants and subalterns that in those trying times awaiting delayed demobilization they "carried on" the task of reconstruction with such energy and efficiency. Nevertheless a few of their higher officials set their face like flint against civilian trading. This treatment greatly discouraged many of the representatives of enterprising British firms sent out to find openings for British trade. Restrictions on freedom of movement, denial of willing help in transport of commodity samples, a succession of pin-pricks and petty annoyances indulged in by these militarists at the expense of civilian business men served to damp glowing enthusiasm for new commercial ventures in those parts. A priceless opportunity occurred in those early months after the Armistice for Britain to capture the Levant markets; although the chance was not absolutely frittered away, yet full advantage cannot be said to have been taken of it.

Shipping and trade usually follow the flag. Military and political links between Britain and Egypt and Palestine invited shipping links. Regular shipping services direct to the Levant ports might have been established, whereby British manufactures, especially Manchester cotton goods and iron-ware, could have been exchanged for Palestine's products—her famous Jaffa oranges, her melons, her olives (rivalling Italy's finest), her barley and her Richon wines. Truly these exported products could not be expected to be of any considerable volume or value in that first year of revival; but a greatly increasing yield was promised in following seasons. Steamship lines could not hope for much initial profit, but an important trade opening could have been made. At least French and Italians

were of this conviction, and it was the "Messageries Maritimes" and the Italian "Lloyd-Trieste" Line (formerly the Austrian Lloyd) which first carried on a coasting trade with the ports of Asia Minor, connected up with the home ports Marseilles and Trieste. Not until the late summer of 1919 did the British "Prince" Line resume its calls at Jaffa, Beyrout and other ports. On its earlier trips Haifa the port of Northern Palestine was even then omitted, and this omission profoundly discouraged the enterprising business men and farmers who wished to install up-to-date scientific machinery. Thus an enlightened farmer of Galilee ordered from England one of the very latest models of agricultural tractor. As the "Prince" steamship did not touch at Haifa, the machine had to be conveyed to Beyrout and there unloaded. This necessitated the chartering of a special craft to transport the huge vehicle by sea back to Haifa, on which journey it suffered some damage owing to a storm experienced en route. Altogether the farmer found that the costs of the last stage of the journey mounted higher than the whole freight charges from distant England. In view of this financial handicap, the British administration accorded him facilities and reduced rates for rail transport to his destination.

To stimulate the revival of trade and agriculture came within the province of the "Q" branches of the Administration in general and of the Economic Section in particular. Investigations were conducted into the economic resources and needs of the various districts. The duty devolved upon the present writer of reporting on places, some of the richest historic and religious interest, such as Caesarea, Acre, Tiberias, and even Nazareth. It gave a curious thrill to deal with such facts as the number of new nets required at Tiberias for fishing on the Lake of Tiberias, and the quantity of cotton cloth and the nature of tools desired by the carpenters of Nazareth! What a strange incongruity to telephone from Haifa at the foot of Mount Carmel to Headquarters at Jerusalem, and to be told by the operator that "the line was busy for a moment, Jaffa holding it"! The Economic Section officials also served as a medium or channel between local merchants and the central Administrative authorities, eliciting the opinion of traders

on commercial matters and explaining to them the measures and policy of the Administration.

In view of the importance of agrarian interests in Palestine, a Department of Agriculture was established under the Administration to advise and assist cultivators in modern methods. The organization consisted of two chief inspectors (one for Northern Palestine and one for Southern), and one or more sub-inspectors in each district. In the autumn of 1919 the British Inspector for Southern Palestine was succeeded by a Palestinian Jew, one Alexander Aaronsohn, a distinguished agricultural expert. Aaronsohn, who had been decorated by Allenby with the D.S.O. for his war-services to the British Intelligence authorities, was the first Palestinian Jew to occupy high position in the Administration. The main concern of the Agricultural officials in the first year was with reafforestation. During the winter season of 1918-19 only some 370,000 trees could be planted, but nearly two millions were to be sown in 1919-20. Definite plans of afforestation were drawn up, dealing primarily with the hill tracts near Jerusalem, with the planting of eucalyptus trees in malarial districts, and of grasses and shrubs for the treatment of sand encroachment on the coast. As the Turks left no forestry material in the country, seeds and seedlings had to be procured from India, Australia and Egypt. A determined effort was also made to cope with cattle-disease, very prevalent under the Turkish régime. An establishment of veterinary officers and sub-inspectors was organized, with Quarantine posts at Haifa and Jaffa.

The water supply of Palestine was extremely defective under the Turks. Everybody has heard how Allenby's troops in the field of battle before Beersheba were supplied in part by water brought through the great pipe-line from Egypt 150 miles away, and how this impressed the credulous in view of the superstition that the downfall of the Turks would be imminent "when the Nile flowed into Palestine." Everybody has also heard of the wonderful water-system installed by the Army engineers at Jerusalem and how it utilized the system of rock-cut channels and the huge reservoir made under Herod and Pontius Pilate. Other places in Palestine were less fortunate, and the inhabitants were compelled to rely on wells

and cisterns. It is partly owing to the presence of these numerous wells, many of them uncovered and many leaky, that malarial mosquitoes abound. To abate this pest, the Administration encouraged the practice of oiling the cisterns and the use of gold fish. Drainage of certain swampy lands near the towns was also attempted on a small scale. Lack of funds and the uncertainty pending the Turkish Peace settlement prevented any radical improvements in the water-supply and drainage systems of towns. The same reasons explain the fact that road-construction on an extensive scale could not be taken in hand, although repairs of main highways were carried out in thorough fashion. Little town-planning could be carried into effect; nevertheless fascinating schemes were drawn up in readiness.

As for the finances of the Administration. The authorities made no attempt to prescribe any definite proportion between direct and indirect taxation—although in practice the two were roughly equal. Under the Turkish rule, indirect taxation had been more favoured. The total taxation amounted to about £1 per head of population. The principle adopted by the Administrators was to continue the main Turkish taxes, but to suspend the more oppressive imposts. It was deemed better to levy these old-established taxes in a regular methodical upright fashion, rather than impose any new and heavy taxation upon the people so soon after the war, even if those revenues might have been applied to beneficial public uses. After centuries of stagnation and misrule and after years of blighting war, the country did not need the sudden creation of an elaborate, highly organized but expensive bureaucratic system. Let Palestine increase in prosperity and its revenues would (it was argued) also expand in proportion, and improvements could gradually be effected such as the people themselves desired.

With regard to the sources of revenue. First and foremost came the revenue from the Customs. As civilian enterprise developed, and commodities flowed into and out of the country in increasing volume, the proceeds from the import and export duties were enormously augmented. The rates of

the Turkish period were continued; for example, 10% *ad valorem* was levied on exports. Customs staffs were maintained at the chief ports and boundary towns. It is of interest to remark that Caesarea becomes temporarily a Customs port during the melon-exporting season; that almost deserted village of splendid ruins, formerly the imposing capital of Herod the Great and later a noble crusading stronghold, awakes again from its slumbers to a fitful activity. The next most important item of revenue was the tithe levied on all produce of the soil. The collection was based on the somewhat unsatisfactory method of estimating crops on the threshing floor after reaping. For the year 1919-20 it was estimated that the tithe would bring in 4 million kilos of wheat and 26 million kilos of barley. The Turk had imposed additional tithes during the war, but our Administration abandoned them. The House and Land Tax of the Turks was retained, but it was found that the assessments on which it was based were in many cases over 50 years old! The necessity for an up-to-date land survey was realized, and the compilation of a Palestine "Domesday Book" was begun. In Palestine there are certain "State Domains," but many of the boundaries of these are in doubt owing to the disappearance of the Turkish records of rights. In addition an Animal Tax was levied on sheep, buffaloes, goats, pigs and camels when the latter were not used for ploughing. Horses, donkeys and cows were exempt. The Hedjaz Stamp Duty, originally instituted by the Turk in 1906 to assist in the construction of the Hedjaz Railway, was also maintained; so also were the taxes imposed by the Turks for the payment of the Ottoman Public Debt. There exists in Palestine a tobacco monopoly, a concession granted by the Turks to a French company, the "Régie Co-Intéressée des Tabacs de l'Empire Ottoman." The revenues thus collected were expended on the various public services already mentioned, and on the maintenance of such services as police, education, hospitals, and pensions.

Such were the chief difficulties confronting British administrators in the economic reconstruction in this conquered territory, paralysed by a Turkish peace-time régime, by war-time requisitions and by the strangling grip of the Allied blockade. But the peculiar religious and political status of Palestine gave

rise to complicated problems of a nature rarely presented to the military administration of occupied enemy territory.

Palestine is a region microscopic in size, but it is microcosmic in character. Mention the main political, social, religious and economic forces that electrify the world of to-day, and it will be found that Palestine, like some sensitive galvanometer, responds to almost all of them. Possibly the main exception is the "colour problem," although the open loathing and contempt in which the few negroid inhabitants of the tropical Jordan Valley are held in an index of this instinctive hostility. Of Bolshevistic and pro-Soviet feeling the only traces apparent to the present writer were the circulation of a small amount of Bolshevik propagandist literature and the singing of a Bolshevik chant; but in view of the advent of Russian and Roumanian Jews into the country, and the rumoured alliance between Turkish Nationalists and the Soviet government, this problem may assume larger proportions in the years to come.

Most of the other great racial and religious antagonisms were, however, much in evidence: the feuds of Jew and Gentile, Christian and Moslem, Greek Orthodox and Latin Catholic, Protestant and Romanist, and even Moslem and Hindu. In addition there were the national rivalries of Britain, France, Italy and America, of Palestinian against Egyptian and of the Allies generally against Germans, Turks, and Austrians. The desire for the application of the principle of "self determination" in the form of an Arab State was becoming widespread, based in part on the ancient dislike of "foreigners" and "foreign" domination. The antipathy between the townsmen, the settled agriculturist and the nomadic Bedouin Arab, between types of the various stages of civilization was also frequently apparent. Capital and Labour were not indeed highly organized for sharp conflict, but socialistic ideas were finding utterance, and the clash of interests between the producer, the consumer and the middleman in the days of high prices sounded forth distinctly. Only one or two of these problems of modern Palestine can be dealt with here.

The key-problem of modern Palestine is that of the relations of the Jews with the local Christian and Moslem inhabi-

tants. Assuredly the Semitic Question has played a prominent part in many European States, notably Russia, Germany and France. But the problem presents itself in Palestine in a distinctive form, owing to the Zionist Movement with its ideal of a return of a proportion of Jews from all countries to found a "national home" in a regenerated Palestine and of the ultimate creation of a Jewish national state in that land. These aspirations, which found diplomatic expression in Mr. Balfour's famous pronouncement in 1917, received formal recognition in the San Remo agreement of the Great Powers, and the consequent appointment of the Jewish Sir Herbert Samuel as High Commissioner. The Zionist ambitions are stoutly and fiercely resisted by the Palestinian Christian and Moslem communities. The resulting clash of interests and feelings is a factor of the gravest import for the preservation of law and order in those parts—as indeed the riots of Easter at Jerusalem in 1920 (resulting in nearly 200 casualties) and the recent disturbances in Haifa offer some indication.

The causes of this bitter antagonism between Jews and Gentiles in Palestine are many and varied. Perhaps religious differences are the most potent. In the West the age of religious wars has departed; but in the Orient the fiery volcanoes of religious rivalries are ever likely to break out into devastating eruption. And it is feared that the manifestation this will take nowadays in Palestine will be a massacre of Jews by Christians and Moslems. Palestine pogroms may be recorded in the history of the 20th century as well as Polish pogroms—unless judicious administrative handling, firm military control and sane unpartisan statesmanship avert such a catastrophe.

In the event of such a conflagration in Palestine, it will fall to the lot of our British and Indian troops to restore law and order, as Britain is assigned as the Mandatory Power. The employment of our Christian and Indian Moslem soldiers for the suppression of local Christians and Moslems will be far from a popular service, and conceivably may have most serious consequences upon the stability of the British Empire, particularly our Moslem possessions. There is grave Moslem unrest already, especially in India and Egypt. Anxiety for their Holy Places, such as Jerusalem and Hebron, thought to be menaced

by Jewish dominance, has undoubtedly increased this disquiet—for it should be borne in mind that Jerusalem is the most sacred place in the Moslem world except Mecca and possibly Medina. The obnoxious task of quelling a Moslem rising in the interests of the Jews might possibly supply the lighted match that would fire a mighty Moslem explosion and raise a universal “Holy War” against the infidel Britain.

Besides the religious cause of animosity, there are other reasons which have contributed to bind together Moslems and Christians in common hostility to Jews. A prime motive is the dislike of the exclusiveness displayed by the Jews. Certain of the Jews in Palestine have unfortunately been prone to assume airs of superiority, claiming they are the “chosen people,” and as such distinct from and superior to other races. They base their claim not only on the glorious Past of their nation, but also they point to the Present. They appeal with justice to the marvellous results on the land achieved in their splendid Jaffa colonies, Zimmarin, Rosch-pina, etc. And they cite the promise of the work of Jewish merchants in trade and commerce. Certainly in Jerusalem and Jaffa the Jews have become completely dominant in mercantile life, and in Haifa they are forging ahead. As a result of this growing prosperity and the hopes fostered by the success of Zionism a section of the Jews manifested an irritating contempt for the “natives” of the country on the grounds of their European experience and connexions.

There were indeed the better-class Jews, who might well claim superiority over the great mass of the Syrians. There were those highly educated magnanimous spirits and those honourable practical men of affairs who had left distant lands to settle down in Palestine in quest of the ideal of a “National Home” inspired by the vision of sitting under their own vine and fig-tree. Such, for example, are those Russian university graduates with bright fervent eyes encountered by the writer near the Lake of Galilee, who had toiled year by year as labourers on the soil, undaunted by emaciating malarial fevers and Turkish governmental obstruction. But over against these was a vast number of Jews inspiring dislike and distrust. In extenuation it may be urged that many have suffered terribly

in their old countries, Poland, Russia, and Roumania. Many visibly carry the "badge of oppression" writ large on their countenances and the "Ghetto look" in their eyes. But obsequious in their attitude to superiors, they are brutal, overbearing, and tyrannical to those under them.

A rigid exclusiveness then characterized the mass of the Jews in Palestine, and this set a wide gulf between them and the rest of the Palestinians. This exclusiveness is manifested in the matter of language. Hitherto very few had known modern Hebrew, but in 1918-19 it was taught, spoken and written on every occasion, thus adding to the Babel of tongues and accentuating differences. Partly as a result of this difference of language, there was practically no social intercourse between the Jews and the local Arabic-speaking inhabitants. In trade or commercial relations too the same aloofness of the Jew from the Gentile was displayed. Commercial transactions did indeed take place between Jew and non-Jew, but the solidarity of the Jews was most apparent. For all retail trading the Jew invariably patronized the shops of his own community. Note too that the Jewish traders and cultivators were extensively subsidized. The munificent generosity of the Rothschilds and the Montefiores in establishing and maintaining colonies in Palestine is well known. In the period under survey the funds of Zionist organizations were freely bestowed upon Jewish farmers and traders. These financial subsidies gave the Jews a tremendous advantage in competition with their non-Jew rivals, who not unnaturally feared to be worsted and ousted from their own ancient home.

The Christian and Moslem population resented the supremacy recently granted to the Jewish race in Palestine. They declared their rights to 'their own country,' basing their claims on the principles of 'self determination,' present possession and antiquity of tenure. Altogether Christians and Moslems mustered 500,000 souls as against only 100,000 Jews then in Palestine; and consequently the majority had the right, according to President Wilson's doctrine of determining their own government and its composition. Moreover the bulk of the Jews had been dispersed from Palestine many hundreds of years; how then could the latter claim it as their "national

home" with more justice than those whose race had occupied it ever since? Such were the arguments used by the Christians and Moslems, and there is undoubtedly much strength in their position, at least if we regard it from the strictly national point of view as distinct from world-interests.

It is no wonder then to find that Jewish exclusiveness is countered on the part of the Christians and Moslems by hostility and obstruction. A trial of one Hassan Bey provided a curious illustration of the antagonistic feeling. Hassan Bey, a Turkish Army doctor of high rank, was responsible for infamous tortures inflicted at Nazareth Headquarters on people suspected of being spies in the Allied interest—the scraping off of skin in patches, the placing of boiling hot eggs under armpits and the inevitable Oriental bastinadoing of the feet. When Hassan Bey was first caught, he was universally execrated for his atrocities by all sections, and on entering Haifa he narrowly escaped being lynched. But the charge against him was that of the murder of a Jew. A number of Jews come forward as witnesses against him; a revulsion of feeling thereupon took place. Hassan Bey was being hounded down by Jews, it seemed to the Christian and Moslem population, and he consequently became something of a hero of anti-Semitic sentiment. Feeling ran very high. At the trial the charge of murder was not proved, but on account of his harshness he was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment by the British judge.

This hostility between the Christians allied with Moslems and the Jews greatly added to the difficulties of administration. For example, in the committee meetings of the Chambers of Commerce these racial differences were preserved in an irritating fashion; because a Jew proposed a certain course of action, the Moslems and Christians would oppose it, and vice versa. It is to be hoped that the Jewish administrative authorities will not abuse the special privileges of ascendancy granted them in Palestine by gross preferential treatment of the Jews and oppression of the non-Jewish population. Let them batten upon the peasantry by financial intrigue and economic exploitation, by usury and forestalling, and sooner or later Palestine will be ablaze with revolt.

This hostility to the Jews was but one aspect of a general

dislike to "foreigners." This attitude was especially apparent in the lower and more ignorant classes, and amongst those Moslem administrator "place-men," who had waxed fat and wealthy by corrupt practices under the Turkish régime. The French were loathed in Syria about Beyrout and we British were not over-popular in certain circles. Indeed this feeling approached to actual fanaticism in one or two of the old Turkish strongholds, notably the bigoted Acre and Nablus (the ancient Shechem). At Nablus British nurses working in the hospital had to go about veiled after the Moslem fashion, until a strong Military Governor put his foot down on the local display of prejudice. Moreover, the inhabitants of Acre came into collision with British troops camped hard by and lives were lost.

In part this feeling was due to disappointment at the results of the British occupation. Hopes were extravagantly high; men believed the Millenium had dawned, that the British flag would bring a new earth if not a new heaven. They expected an era of peace and plenty, but the military occupation still persisted and food prices reigned high—as in the rest of the world. They expected that the streets would be paved with gold (and their counting-house tables!) and resented the punishment in the shape of money losses for their rash speculations, particularly in sugar. It was the appalling delay in concluding the Turkish Peace Treaty (which was not signed till some twenty months after the Armistice) that paralysed British activities. How could we embark on vast enterprises involving the outlay of tremendous capital (e.g., the building of port works at Haifa) when it remained unsettled whether Britain would be the Mandatory Power or some other, France or possibly America? Consequently we simply marked time, while the local inhabitants were expecting us to take big strides forward.

As already suggested, lovers of "red tape" in authority also continued the irksome war-restrictions, e.g., the censorship of letters and the limitation of travelling facilities. Some of our British administrators too were prone to fling about contemptuous epithets at the Palestinians as "Dagoes," "Levantines," or worse still, "Natives," even in official documents.

Educated as many of them have been at the splendid American College at Beyrout or in France, they resented bitterly these descriptions, and the social exclusiveness of the British official community.

The attitude of the Military Governor of Haifa, Col. E. A. Stanton, C.M.G., towards the people under his control set a notable example. It may be of interest to note that Colonel Stanton was Military Secretary to the Duke of Connaught whilst the latter was Governor-General of Canada, and has a distinct recollection of that very bleak afternoon in the winter of 1914-15 when they came down to Kingston and inspected our Queen's Officers Training Corps Contingent. In view of the hostility between the various religious communities it is a remarkable tribute to the respect in which he was held that the leaders of the Jewish, Christian and Moslem communities all assembled and broke bread together, to do him honour before his departure on leave to England.

Connected with the fear of a Jewish State in Palestine and dislike of the rule of the "alien" are the nationalist aspirations of a considerable section of the population. That President Wilson's doctrine of self determination, of self-government, has exerted an electrifying effect on Eastern peoples is a well-established fact. There seems to be no movement to form a separate Palestine State, but great numbers of Palestinians (Christian as well as Moslem) desire to form part of a rejuvenated Arab Empire of Syria and Arabia (see *Queen's Quarterly* for October, 1920). Emir Feisal was a great hero, as the tremendous ovations with which his name was greeted in public meetings abundantly testified. A yearning for national independence is an important factor in modern Palestine, as it is in Egypt. A war of Arab independence may possibly occur in our generation.

Sectarian disturbances will certainly occur and recur for a long time to come. Within the Christian fold, the feud between the Latin Catholic and the Greek Orthodox Church is an exceedingly bitter one. It is reflected of course in the rival chapels erected on the Holy Places at Jerusalem, a Roman Catholic Gethsemane or Calvary adjoining a Greek Orthodox site, each trying to outshine the other. A fortnight before the

present writer visited Bethlehem, there had been a free fight between the rival adherents within the Church of the Nativity, so that British sentries with fixed bayonets had to be posted in the little Grotto itself to keep the peace. These divergences of feeling were also apparent when the American Diplomatic Mission visited Palestine as part of the former Turkish Empire to ascertain from the peoples the Mandatory Power they desired to rule over them. The Roman Catholics demanded France as the Mandatory Power. The Greek Orthodox community therefore plumped for Britain. The entry of the Orthodox Bishop of Acre into his see at this juncture was made the occasion for demonstrations in favour of British control; sumptuous dinners were given, to which British officials were invited, and at which venerable priests with long patriarchal beards waved tiny Union Jacks and toasted King George.

French partisanship amongst the Roman Catholics was curiously revealed at the Restoration ceremony of the Napoleon Monument on Mount Carmel. During the siege of Acre in 1799 many of Napoleon's soldiers died at the Carmelite Monastery hospital, and about 1850 a pyramid was raised over their bones. After Turkey's entry into the war on the side of Germany, the local Turcophiles instigated by the German Consul at Haifa formally rased the pyramid, and scattered the bones of the veterans of "la Grande Armée." In dramatic revenge for this ghoulish act, a French warship steamed into the harbour, and after giving warning completely wrecked the German Consul's house with fifteen most accurately directed shells. After the British occupation the desecrated monument was restored. At the dedication ceremony representative British officers, including three generals, were present. Nevertheless the Catholic Bishop made a long speech extolling the greatness of France, completely ignoring the achievements of Britain—which incidentally had restored him to the bishopric from which he had been exiled by the Turks on account of his French sympathies. A French army officer repaired this error of taste and truth by his magnificent tribute to the work of Allenby. Such incidents however illustrate the racial antagonisms apparent in over-zealous partisans in

distant lands. There is, however, considerable rivalry between English and French trade in these parts, and this will be accentuated when Haifa after the completion of her port works will be in a position to compete with the French port of Beyrout for the trade of the Arab hinterland.

The Italians too are making a strong bid for the economic supremacy of the Levant; they are greatly helped by the use of the fine Trieste steamship lines taken over from the Austrians. It will be a long time before Germany will take as prominent a part in the commercial affairs of those regions as she did before the war; but the German colonies, particularly the beautiful one at Haifa, will serve as a nucleus and as "points d'appui" for German trade effort. American business concerns have begun to interest themselves seriously in Palestine, and the U.S.A. will prove a formidable competitor in the race for trade domination.

Lack of space prevents a discussion of the clash of interests between Palestinians and Egyptians, between Hindu soldiers and Moslem inhabitants, or of the conflict between the nomadic Bedouins and the settlers in town and farm. For indeed Palestine still has its "Eastern Peril," the peril from plundering marauders and wandering Bedouins hailing from east of the Jordan Valley. Once or twice fairly strong cavalcades swept suddenly across Palestine; but British and Australian yeomanry sallied out and soon recovered the booty of cattle and released the girls who were being carried off. The incursions of the Midianites in the time of the Israelites are recalled by these similar inroads, a typical example of the way in which the immemorial past and the living present are ever meeting in this land of enthralling interest.

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